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United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Seventeenth Session (Second Part)

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 495th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 4 April 1978, at 12.30 p.m.

President: Mr. de ALWIS (Sri Lanka)

CONTENTS

Opening of the second part of the seventeenth session

Other particular matters in the field of trade and development (agenda item 6) (continued):

(b) Progressive development of the law of international trade: tenth annual report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters (agenda item 7) (continued):

(b) Announcement of any changes in the membership of the Board and election to membership of the main Committees (continued)

(f) Review of the calendar of meetings (continued)

(h) Rationalization of the structure of the permanent machinery of UNCTAD (continued)

Other business (agenda item 8):

Report of the Working Party on the medium-term plan 1980-1983

Matters requiring action by the Board arising from or related to reports and activities of its subsidiary and other bodies (agenda item 5) (continued):

(a) Commodity trade: Tungsten

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OPENING OF THE SECOND PART OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION

1. The PRESIDENT declared open the second part of the seventeenth session.

OTHER PARTICULAR MATTERS IN THE FIELD OF TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (agenda item 4) (continued):

(c) PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAW OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE: TENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAW (UNCITRAL) (A/32/17 - TD/B/664)

2. The PRESIDENT said that the Board had before it the tenth annual report of UNCITRAL (A/32/17 - TD/B/664). In the absence of any objections, he suggested that the Board should take note with appreciation of the report.

3. It was so decided.

INSTITUTIONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED MATTERS (agenda item 7) (continued)

(b) ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANY CHANGES IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD AND ELECTION TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES (TD/B/677)

4. The PRESIDENT announced that, since the first part of the seventeenth session, Jordan had indicated that it wished to become a member of the Committee on Invisibles and Financing related to Trade, and the United Arab Emirates had expressed a wish to become a member of the Committee on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries. He proposed that the names of those countries should be added to the list of members of the Committees in question.

5. It was so decided.

(f) REVIEW OF THE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS (TD/B/INF.76 and TD/B/L.502 and Add.1)

6. The PRESIDENT drew attention to the further changes proposed (TD/B/L.502) and to their financial implications (TD/B/L.502/Add.1).

7. Mr. ROSSEN (Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD) said that, if the Board approved all the proposed changes in the calendar of meetings (TD/B/L.502), the total number of weeks of meetings in 1978 would amount to 114½ weeks, which would leave little scope for further additions; and, in most cases, meetings could be rescheduled only if other meetings of similar size were also rescheduled.

8. Since the United Nations Conference to Negotiate an International Arrangement to Replace the International Wheat Agreement, 1971, as extended, had been unable to complete its work, it had requested its Chairman to take the necessary measures to convene an Interim Committee to prepare a draft arrangement; it had also requested the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to reconvene the Conference by September 1978 in the light of a recommendation to be made by the Interim Committee

not later than the end of July 1975. Following his consultations, the Chairman of the Conference had requested that the first meeting of the Interim Committee should be convened at Geneva from 1 to 5 May 1975, and had proposed that a second meeting of the Committee should be held in Geneva from 26 May to 6 June 1975. The second meeting would involve ministers, since the Interim Committee would be expected to make definitive available for the Interim Committee, and the Trade and Development Board might therefore wish to approve that proposal. The financial implications for the meetings of the Interim Committee had been based on a possible five weeks of meetings. It was therefore suggested that a further letter should be sent to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, which should take a decision in principle. With regard to the Conference itself, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD proposed that it should be scheduled tentatively from 11 to 29 November 1975 at Geneva, on the understanding that the date could be confirmed in the light of the recommendation by the Interim Committee.

9. With regard to the calendar of meetings under the Integrated Programme for Commodities, the preparatory meetings on cotton (2-6 June) and meat (16-20 June) were to be postponed. The reference to the meeting on cotton in the revised calendar of meetings (TD/B/INF.98, annex II) should therefore be deleted; the meeting on meat did not appear in the calendar since its postponement had already been known at the time when the Board at its seventh session.

10. Should a decision to convene the United Nations Negotiating Conference on a Common Fund under the Integrated Programme for Commodities subsequently make it necessary to reschedule some meetings, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD would use the consultation machinery established in Board decisions 140 (XVI) and 143 (XVI) before deciding on such changes.

11. Mr. SUNTZ-STRUBIAKS (Poland), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, proposed that the ninth session of the Committee on Manufactures, which was scheduled for 19 May to 6 June 1975, should be postponed until the end of the year, in order to await the conclusion of the work of the Co-ordination Committee of the Group of 77 for the Multilateral Trade Negotiations, which was to continue until July.

12. Mr. FEVRE (France), speaking on behalf of Group B, said that the Group B countries endorsed the calendar of meetings for 1975 with the proposed changes. With regard to the proposal of the Group of 77 that the ninth session of the Committee on Manufactures should be postponed, the Group B countries would give a final answer at the next meeting, after consultations.

13. Mr. IVANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on behalf of the Group D countries, said that those countries wished to make an observation with regard to the meeting of the Group of high-level experts on finance for development: multilateral insurance and reinsurance of investment and guarantee powers of international financial institutions (TD/B/L.492, paragraph 2 (e)). When the General Assembly had decided on the meeting (resolution 32/177), the Group D countries had made a joint declaration in which they had expressed some

reservations on the grounds that the objectives of the meeting were contrary to the interests of the developing countries, since they related to the protection of foreign private capital and the activities of transnational corporations in the developing countries. The reservations made by the Group D countries in the General Assembly still applied.

14. With regard to the proposal by the Group of 77 for postponing the session of the Committee on Manufactures, the Group D countries would like to hold consultations before giving a final answer.

15. The PRESIDENT suggested that a decision on the proposal by the Group of 77 concerning the calendar of meetings should be deferred until the following meeting.

16. It was so decided.

(b) RATIONALIZATION OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE PERMANENT MACHINERY OF UNCTAD (TD/B/L.497)

17. The PRESIDENT said that, pursuant to Board decisions 162 (XVII) and 163 (XVII), the Secretary-General of UNCTAD had held consultations with co-ordinators of regional groups on the terms of reference of the Committee on Shipping and on the rationalization of the structure of the permanent machinery of UNCTAD. At those consultations, it had been agreed that consideration of those questions should be deferred in order to allow delegations more time for consultation and reflection. He therefore proposed that the Board should defer until its eighteenth regular session its decision on the terms of reference of the Committee on Shipping and its consideration of the question of the rationalization of the permanent machinery, and that it should invite the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to provide regional groups with further clarification on those issues should the groups consider that necessary.

18. It was so decided.

OTHER BUSINESS (agenda item 8):

REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN 1980-1983 (TD/B(XVII)/WP/L.1 and Add.1-10)

19. The PRESIDENT proposed that consideration of the report, which was still to be circulated and discussed in consultations, should be deferred until the following meeting.

20. It was so decided.

MATTERS REQUIRING ACTION BY THE BOARD ARISING FROM OR RELATED TO REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES OF ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES (agenda item 5) (continued)

(e) COMMODITY ISSUES

Tungsten (TD/B/693; TD/B/C.1/TUNGSTEN/26)

21. Mr. ALIYARISCHIYA (Thailand), Chairman of the Committee on Tungsten, introduces the report of the Committee on its eleventh special session, which had been devoted mainly to the consideration of the report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Tungsten to examine the stabilization of the world tungsten market. Within the Group of Experts, no agreement had been reached between tungsten producers and consumers on methods of stabilization. Three views had been put forward: a majority of experts from consuming countries had recommended that the Board should appoint a group for the drafting of a charter for a producer/consumer consultative body; experts from most producing countries and some consuming countries had recommended that the Board should request the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to convene a negotiating conference with the objective of formulating a mutually acceptable international arrangement; the expert from a major producing country had recommended that the Board should request the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to convene a new group to prepare draft articles for a framework agreement for consideration by Governments.

22. At its eleventh special session, the Committee on Tungsten had merely taken note of the report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Group of Experts and decided to transmit its conclusions and recommendations to the Board.

23. It was regrettable that neither the Group of Experts nor the Committee had been able to make a unanimous recommendation to the Board. He hoped that a solution satisfactory to all might finally be found, since the principal interested Governments had had more time for reflection since the Committee's session. However, if a solution were to emerge during the present session of the Board, it would require urgent consultations.

24. The PRESIDENT proposed that a decision on tungsten should be deferred until the following meeting, in order to give delegations time to study the three positions outlined by the Chairman of the Committee on Tungsten.

25. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.